

OCTOBER 10, 1978

HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN  
(VOICED PIECE IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR:

IN TURIN, ITALY THIS WEEK AN INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF SCIENTISTS IS EXAMINING ONE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH'S MOST MYSTERIOUS AND HOLY RELICS: THE BURIAL SHROUD BELIEVED TO BE THAT OF JESUS CHRIST. VOA'S EDIE SMITH APPLE REPORTS.

VOICE:

A FINAL MASS ON SUNDAY (OCT. 8) MARKED THE LAST OF FORTY-THREE DAYS WHEN CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WERE ABLE TO WORSHIP BEFORE THE HOLY SHROUD. THE LONG THIN PIECE OF LINEN HAD BEEN ON DISPLAY BEHIND GLASS IN SAINT JOHN'S CATHEDRAL IN TURIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEARLY FIFTY YEARS. MANY BELIEVE IT TO BE THE CLOTH USED TO WRAP JESUS CHRIST AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION AND ON THE CLOTH A FAINT IMAGE OF THE HEAD AND BODY OF A MAN CAN BE SEEN WITH THE NAKED EYE. THE IMPRESSION ON THE CLOTH IS CALLED BY SOME THE WORLD'S OLDEST PHOTOGRAPH. BUT NO ONE SO FAR HAS BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN HOW THE IMAGE WAS CREATED. FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS AS WELL AS CHURCH OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN FASCINATED BY THE MYSTERY WHICH HAS BEEN INCREASED BY PHOTOGRAPHS AND COMPUTERS USED TO STUDY THE IMAGE. THESE SHOW DETAILS INDICATING THE BODY WRAPPED IN THE SHROUD HAD BEEN BEATEN AND STABBED--SUFFERING AS THE GOSPELS SAY CHRIST SUFFERED. SEVERAL YEARS AGO A SWISS CRIMINOLOGIST, MAX FREI, WAS CALLED IN TO EXAMINE THE SHROUD ALONG WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHS. AS HE EXPLAINED IN TURIN LAST SUNDAY, HE DISCOVERED DUST ON THE CLOTH AND RECEIVED PERMISSION TO STUDY IT. WITH THE HELP OF SPECIAL SCOTCH (GUMMED) TAPE HE TOOK DUST SAMPLES FROM THE BORDER. HE DISCOVERED THERE WERE POLLEN GRAINS IN THIS

DUST. AND WITH THESE POLLEN GRAINS HE WAS ABLE TO TELL WHERE THE SHROUD HAD BEEN. THE POLLEN MISTER FREI FOUND HE SAYS CAME FROM JERUSALEM, TURKEY AND FRANCE AS WELL AS ITALY. ALL PLACES LEGEND SAYS THE SHROUD PASSED THROUGH BEFORE ARRIVING IN TURIN. THE SWISS CRIMINOLOGIST WAS THE FIRST SCIENTIST ALLOWED TO EXAMINE THE SHROUD AFTER IT WAS REMOVED FROM PUBLIC VIEW SUNDAY NIGHT. OTHERS INCLUDED A GROUP OF AMERICAN SPACE SCIENTISTS. KENNETH STEPHENS ONE OF THE AMERICANS EXPLAINED SUNDAY JUST WHAT TESTS THEY WILL BE MAKING. THERE ARE, IN FACT, HE SAID A SERIES OF ELECTROMAGNETIC TESTINGS FROM THE INFRARED TO THE ULTRAVIOLET AND X-RAY FLUORESCENT AS WELL AS SPECTROSCOPY AND TAPE SAMPLING. WITH ALL THESE TESTS MISTER STEPHENS SAYS, THEY HOPE TO ANSWER TWO BASIC QUESTIONS: THE FIRST, WHAT IS THE COMPOSITION OF THE IMAGE, WHAT ACTUAL ELEMENTS MAKE UP ITS STRUCTURE? THE SECOND, WHAT PROCESS COULD POSSIBLY HAVE FORMED THE IMAGE? THESE TWO QUESTIONS MISTER STEPHENS SAID, THEY HOPE AND PRAY TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER. ONE QUESTION MAY NOT BE ANSWERED YET: THE AGE OF THE SHROUD. THIS CANNOT BE DETERMINED FROM THE POLLEN AND THE CARBON FOURTEEN TEST WHICH COULD BE USED TO DETERMINE THE AGE OF THE CLOTH IS NOT BEING ALLOWED. IT IS FEARED THIS TEST WOULD PRESENT TOO GREAT A RISK TO THE CLOTH. BUT IS THERE A RISK IN ALLOWING SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF A VENERATED OBJECT? APPARENTLY THE CHURCH DOES NOT THINK SO. SOME, THOUGH NOT ALL, OF THE SCIENTISTS SAY THEY ARE ALREADY CONVINCED THAT THE CLOTH IS AUTHENTIC. BUT THEY CLAIM THAT THIS WILL HAVE NO INFLUENCE AT ALL ON THEIR TESTS. AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF TURIN COMMENTED "WHEN YOU PUT THINGS IN THE HANDS OF SCIENTISTS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY WHERE THEY WILL COME OUT. WE HOPE THEY'LL COME OUT AT A HAPPY CONCLUSION."

BUT HE ADDED "THIS IS JUST A HOPE."

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